

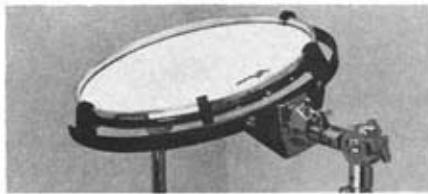
by Bob Saylowski, Jr.

RIMS Headset

Back in my first review of Remo *PTS* products (Dec. '82), I commented that perhaps somebody would find some way to use the *PTS* heads *alone* as musical instruments. My crystal ball was right. The RIMS *Headset* utilizes Remo's *PTS* drumheads along with the RIMS Mounting System to create a totally portable, shell-less drumkit. Two configurations are available—a three-piece and a four-piece setup. The four-piece kit has 10", 12", and 14" toms, plus a 20" bass drum. There is no snare drum included, but the kit does include two built-on cymbal holders.



The *RIMS* concept, when used on conventional drums, gives a drum the freedom to resonate by suspending it. A steel strip extends halfway around the drum, and it is connected to the drum by flanges, which accept the drum's tuning rods, allowing them to rest on vibration-isolating rubber grommets. A steel plate attached to the strip then connects with the drum's mounting bracket. On the *Headset*, this concept has been modified a little to suspend *PTS* heads alone. Since there are no drum rods, the pre-tuned heads are mounted with rubber hook clamps. (The bass drum has six of these clamps, while the toms have four suspension clamps.)

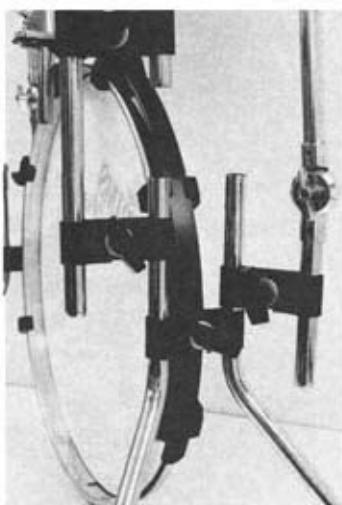


The framework for the *Headset* is built around the bass drum, which is a coated 20" *PTS Dark* head, mounted in a black RIMS suspension. The head has its own built-in hoop for pedal mounting and is set up so that the beater strikes the smooth backside of the head, rather than the coated side. A strip of felt is taped on near

the bottom of the playing side to give some degree of dampening. On the sides of the bass drum are four steel legs, bent into 45° angles and set into *Omni-Clamps*. The legs are adjustable for height and span within these clamps, and they hold the bass drum (and the entire kit) in position quite well. To further reduce creeping of the kit, an adhesive non-skid pad is supplied for use on the bottom of your bass drum pedal.

Atop the bass drum RIMS mount is a holder bracket for the 10" tom-tom arm to pass through. This tubular arm uses a concealed-ratchet angle adjustment, is secured in the bracket by a key screw, and has memory locks on both ends. The same type of holder bracket is used on the tom-tom's RIMS support. In certain setups, this arm may be too long—interfering with the beater area of the bass drum—so the tube may have to be cut.

Numerous *Omni-Clamps* are attached to the bass drums RIMS support. These hold the four legs as mentioned before, the other two tom-toms, and two cymbal holders. The clamps have two openings and are tightened down by hand-size knobs. They allow for full height adjustment and spread of all the *Headset* component attachments.



The 12" and 14" tom-toms fit into their own *Omni-Clamps*, and each has its own RIMS suspension with holder bracket and holder arm. They are set up from the right side of the kit, and can adjust for height, angle, and spread. The four-piece *Headset* has two telescoping cymbal arms set into *Omni-Clamps*. These have concealed-ratchet action cymbal tilters, as well as ratchet angle adjustments near their bottoms for tilting and positioning the entire

cymbal arm either away from or closer towards the kit. (I'd personally like to see another angle ratchet near the top of the cymbal holder for angling the cymbal into the kit, after positioning it away with the bottom ratchet—something like Yamaha's dog-bone style cymbal holder.) Anyway, these cymbal posts allow ample height and are sturdy.

Upon setting everything up, what you have is a four-drum, two-cymbal kit that can be picked up with one hand! One of my favorite features of the *Headset* is that the whole thing folds up compactly into a 7" x 28" foam-filled fiber case! This means that you can move your entire kit into the gig in *one trip*: One hand carries the *Headset*, and the other carries your trap case (holding your snare drum, snare and hi-hat stands, pedal, seat, sticks, and cymbals). The four-piece *Headset* weighs in at approximately 40 pounds when packed up and can be transported along with a trap case in almost any automobile trunk.



You're probably asking, "Well, how do they *sound*?" The answer is: quite good! Since the *PTS* heads themselves have a built-in pitch, there is no capability for varying the tuning of each drum, short of changing the *PTS* heads to another pitch type. From what I can tell, the heads supplied are all of the *PTS Mellow* category, so that gives you the leeway to change to either *Brights* for a higher pitch or *Darks* for a lower pitch. The secret to the sound lies in the RIMS system and in the rubber clamps. The drums produce a clear tonal pitch with good volume. The smaller diameters approach the sound of timbales, perhaps, with their wide-open resonance. I found that a wooden beater works best with the bass drum to get a punchy sound, without as much "flap." In certain playing situations, a more muted tom-tom sound is necessary. I tried some clamp-on external

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mufflers and found they choked off the resonance *too* much. Some strategically placed pieces of tape on the head surfaces seemed to accomplish what I was looking for—giving more "thud," while still retaining the head's natural clarity.

I'm fascinated by the concept of the *RIMS Headset*, and I'm sure the manufacturer will find ways to improve it even more. As it stands, it's a good-sounding kit and ideal for those casual one-nighter gigs. The *Headset* is tops in portability by far, and I applaud any manufacturer that wants to make our drumming life easier. The three-drum setup retails at \$475; the four-piece setup retails at \$575. An Anvil fiber case is available at \$75, and a demo cassette of the kit is free for the asking. For more information, write: Purecussion, 5957 W. 37th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55416.

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7. *Want more durability from your "expendable" items?* Traditionally, sticks, heads, and to a lesser degree, cymbals constitute the greatest portion of a drummer's overhead. Once a kit is purchased, chances are it's going to be around for several years. But sticks and heads can go on a nightly basis. Faced with this problem, the industry has employed chemical engineering to come up with synthetic sticks, such as those from Aquarian, Riff-Rite, and Polybeat. Additionally, wood laminates have been used to create more durable wood sticks. Drumheads of Kevlar woven fabric and also of fiberglass are available. And the cymbal makers have answered the need for more durable cymbals by offering heavier, less breakable cymbals that still retain a musical characteristic. Drum equipment technology has probably seen more development in this area over the past ten years than in any other, with the exception of electronics.

8. *Want more portability from your kit?* See Bob Saydowski's *Product Close-Up* of the new *RIMS Headset* in this issue. If you play casuals regularly, or if you play clubs with tiny stages or difficult loading access, this may be the answer to your prayers. And if you think it may not have the projection or sound you require for a louder gig, don't discount it completely; consider it in combination with triggering devices hooked to an electronic "brain." You might be able to produce virtually any drum sound you care to through your

sound system and still have a very small amount of equipment to carry around. This type of thinking is pretty radical, but radical technology often proves the most beneficial in the long run.

9. *Want to incorporate electronics gradually?* Since we've introduced the subject of electronics, let's close with it. Obviously, it's a major ingredient in the music most club bands are playing. Today's technology offers many ways to approach it, short of converting to it entirely, which I certainly don't recommend to any club drummer. If you want to combine electronics with your acoustic drums, you can add any of the single-pad units, such as the Simmons *SDS1* or *Drum-FX2* by JTG of Nashville. Recent innovations from both these companies (as well as some outside firms) offer multiple-chip switching devices, so that although you only use one pad, you can select from several sound chips instead of having to insert a new chip for each sound. Another way to blend acoustic and electronic sounds is to trigger an electronic "brain" from the acoustic drums, using internal mic's such as those I've already described, mic' interface devices such as the *MX-1* by Marc, or contact triggers, which are offered by several companies (and which you can build yourself fairly inexpensively. I know of one club drummer who made a perfectly functional electronic pad drumkit by combining several homemade contact triggers and a Remo practice pad kit.) Several compa-

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nies, notably Barcus-Berry and The Music People, Inc. (*Drumfire*), offer very small pads that can be mounted along with acoustic drums without much additional space being taken up. The *Shark* and the *Drum Workshop EP-1* offer access to electronics via your feet, without requiring any form of drumpad whatever.

The point I'm making with this list is that embracing new technology need not involve the sacrificing of one's musical principles or the expenditure of thousands of dollars. It can, in fact, mean only the simple examination of your needs and a bit of research into what is on the market today to meet those needs. Back in July of 1982, I did a column called "Taking Stock," in which I encouraged club drummers to re-evaluate their setups, their choice of equipment, and their personal approaches to playing. With the incredible advances in drum-related technology that have taken place since that time, I definitely think it's time to "take stock" again.

Note: In my column entitled "On The Rise: Part 1" last January, I said that there were no drum risers commercially available. The Humes & Berg Company of East Chicago, Indiana, makes a line of band and choral risers that can be employed as drum risers. They are of the folding-table design I described in my column, and a 4' x 6' x 16" riser lists for \$199.00. For further information, contact them at 4801 Railroad Avenue, East Chicago, IN 46312.